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NEWPORT (SALOP) URBAN DISTRICT

I N T E R I M R E P O R T

- of the -

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH


- on the -

HEALTH AND SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES

- for -

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I N T E R I M R E P O R T

on the Health and Sanitary Circumstances of the Urban District of Newport (Salop) for the year 1941.

No change has been made in the precedent established at the outbreak of war and again the Annual Report is presented in an abridged form.

The extent to which the District has been affected by notifiable disease is dealt with fully in the relevant section of the Report. Any concern which was felt in this connection was associated with the increased presence of diphtheria. That this position might arise was anticipated in the repeated appeals of the Minister of Health asking parents to take advantage of the preventive facilities available. The danger, as well as the appeals has been country-wide. By the end of the year a considerable proportion of the child population had been protected and the possibility of future outbreaks had been proportionately reduced.

1940 saw the gradual adoption of emergency measures to meet the prevailing conditions and the changes ordered by the Ministry of Health controlling Water Supplies, Housing, Infectious disease and Meat have been gradually incorporated into the administration. In the current year it remained to note certain Orders passed to prevent possible effects of overcrowding and movement of population. These Orders concerned Typhus Fever, Scabies and Recommendations for dealing with Lice infestation.

The Ministry of Food granted certain extension of privilege to invalids allowing them increased rations of certain foods: milk and eggs.

Officers of Authorities were given the opportunity to become proficient in the methods of dealing with gas-contaminated foodstuffs.

For this purpose a series of Lectures was held in certain neighbouring Towns. The applicability of this instruction to this locality was the chief consideration of the Sanitary Inspector.

The Principal Regional Officer has, at times, directed attention to foods likely to carry disease through contamination.

The capacity of the District to deal with the hospitalisation of expectant mothers was the subject of an investigation by the

County Medical Officer. This subject was of much interest locally as many persons from outside the Area had been seeking to be confined in the Nursing Home.

The attention of Medical Practitioners has been directed, as occasion arose, to matters of common concern with a view to securing the maximum co-operation in the maintenance of efficiency in health practice.

In the early summer a lecture was given by Sir Drummond Shield. This, on a biological subject with the associated diseases, was held in the Council Hall and was directed by your Chairman.

The Medical Officer takes this opportunity of thanking the Sanitary Inspector for his co-operation the course of the year.

POPULATION. This continues to show an increase on pre-war standards and can be accounted for by voluntary evacuation and the constant calls of neighbouring industries for labour. Housing carried out in the adjoining District, despite its slow progress, may do something, in time, to relieve conditions. The improved bus service on the Newport-Wellington Road has been a great convenience to residents living on this route, allowing them facilities to shop locally. Considerable advantage has been taken of this by housewives.

Hospitality continues to be extended to military personnel. Canteens and Reading and Rest Rooms have been opened centrally in the Town and soldiers contacted have stated their appreciation. The limited capacity of the local cinema has, at times, been severely taxed but, with the organisation of entertainments in camps, something has been done to relieve this pressure.

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES. The pathological and bacteriological connection with the University of Birmingham has been severed with the opening of the Donaldson-Hudson Laboratory at Shrewsbury. This has been built as an annexe to the Royal Salop Infirmary. Another connection that with the Emergency Health Laboratory at Wellington, was broken when it was found necessary to remove its headquarters to Hereford. This establishment has served the District well, particularly where it was necessary to secure an early bacteriological confirmation for diagnosis. In the outbreak of diphtheria rapid reports on swabs were a feature of the service.

AMBULANCES. No changes have been made in this service and no difficulties have arisen in the course of the Year.

WATER SUPPLIES. This service continued to function satisfactorily. The Chlorination Plant worked well and the active co-operation of the Analyst from Harper-Adams College facilitated the water examinations. The Reports were, in every case, satisfactory.

SHELTERS. The trench-shelters in the Town have been discontinued. No changes have been made in those remaining: at the Vine Vaults and at Adams' House in the High Street.

SCAVENGING. The weekly refuse collection was able to be maintained despite difficulties experienced in obtaining horse replacements. The Tip has been well controlled and has been inspected at regular intervals by the Sanitary Inspector.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL AND DRAINAGE. In the course of the Year no change has been made in the general work of this system. An extension to the Boundary of the Authority has been carried out in Forton Road; this to give means to the neighbouring authority to connect to the Town's main sewer and unserved property close at hand. The Farm, situated on the boundary and in much need of improved sanitation, had not been connected up at the end of the year.

Drain stoppages in the vicinity of the Central Slaughter House and Beaumaris Road received attention and, owing to the recurrence of this difficulty, the attention of the Manager was directed to the need for care in disposal of waste.

At the disposal works the grit tanks were cleaned out at intervals. The rat problem at the Cūmfall was met by contracting with the County Authority to deal with the matter and, at the same time, this Authority was asked to deal with a similar infestation in store-houses in Vineyard Road.

During the course of the Year drains and ditches have been cleaned out as required.

HOUSING. No new property has been built but, so far as possible, repairs and reconditioning were carried out.

One house was condemned to prevent the letting to a new tenant on rehousing. The property in question had been considered for clearance before the onset of War and on reinspection had been found to have advanced in deterioration.

Advantage was taken of legislation providing for the licensing of property already condemned but capable of giving shelter in emergency. These Licenses are limited in their length of validity. Four houses were granted this privilege.

Cases of overcrowding have been brought to notice from time to time and measures taken to relieve where possible. It has, however, not been found possible to reduce the numbers to the limits required by the Ministry of Health.

Owing to the severity of the winter difficulties arising from burst pipes and cracked lavatory pans and the securing of repairs and replacements, it was found necessary to circularise tenants requiring them to guard against extremes of weather and not to leave pipes and lavatories unprotected.

The Sanitary Inspector has inspected Council Houses regularly.

MEAT AND FOOD SUPPLIES. This District and the immediate surround continue to be served by the Central Slaughter house situated in the Town. This service is under the control of the Sanitary Inspector who inspects all meat passing from this establishment; meats found unsuitable for human consumption have been condemned and confiscated and reported on to the Council monthly. Cleansing and repair of the Slaughter House has had close supervision.

Through the co-operation of the local shop-keepers opportunity has been given to examine other Food Stuffs and, in certain instances, condemned; the foods concerned were chiefly eggs and tinned goods.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE. From a survey of returns for the year it was noted that the distribution of notified disease was confined to the more common ailments. There was one exception to this and the case in question was of a type usually associated with overcrowding or war conditions. At no time could it be said that epidemic conditions prevailed although there was a further rise in the frequency of Diphtheria on the returns of the preceding year. Fourteen cases were notified in the first quarter, three in the second and again three in the third - the remainder of the year was free. Of the total of twenty cases 5 had been immunised. All were taken to hospital and died.

Returns compiled at the end of the year showed that rather less than the average for other Districts in the North Eastern Area had taken advantage of the free immunisation offered as a preventive measure. This was the position where school children was concerned but in the infant and preschool groups, although the Town showed a return in advance of her neighbours, it was by no means sufficient to guarantee an average degree of protection to this class. To safeguard the community and to protect child life from this dangerous disease the local parents have this matter in their own hands, every facility is available, is within easy reach and, as the treatment entails no hardship to the patient, no excuse can be offered for failure to take advantage of this progressive service in hygiene.

There was a rise in the number of cases of Measles on the returns of 1940 but this District, since the adoption of compulsory notification has provided regular evidence of the presence of this common ailment. The cyclic nature of attack of measles has not applied in this Town in recent years. Other Authorities in the North Eastern Area and even the Country, generally, in 1940 were comparatively free and succumbed to attacks of much greater severity in the current year. The highest frequency of notification was in the second quarter, which quarter also saw the decline of the attack: one case only being notified in the last six months. The number of cases of Whooping cough approximated to that of Measles, but in this instance notifications were evenly apportioned over the first half of the Year: two cases, only, occurred in the last six months.

Pneumonia gave rise to thirteen cases, distributed evenly over the four quarters. Four cases of Erysipelas, three of Euerperal Pyrexia one of Cerebre-Spinal Fever and one of scarlet Fever were notified. This last instance shows a continued freedom from a condition which in latter years has shewn a tendency to appear sporadically in mild forms over wide areas.

There is little change in the Tubercular Register.

Males.		Females.	
Pulmonary.	Non-pulmonary.	Pulmonary.	Non-pulmonary.
1940. 9.	8	4	17
1941 11	10	5	22

Any slight rise may be accounted for by the movement of population and some reduction in figures should be confidently anticipated with the return of normal conditions. The particular freedom in this Area of the lungtype of ailment is to be noted, particularly among females.

Contageous infections, particularly scabies and impetigo, gave rise to no difficulties during the year although there was increased evidence of the presence of the former in the last quarter. Much can be done by cleansing and a careful use of rationed soap will be necessary to ensure, through cleanliness of body and clothes, freedom from skin disease.

W.A.M. STEWART,

Medical Officer of Health.

1st. June., 1942.

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